

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **GOV. EASLEY'S LEARN AND EARN HIGH SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS FEATURED AT NATIONAL SUMMIT ON DROPOUT PREVENTION**

**WASHINGTON**— At a national conference on dropout prevention today in Washington, D.C., Gov. Mike Easley highlighted his efforts to reform North Carolina's high schools so that more students graduate and go to college. Easley's *Learn and Earn* Early College High School initiative was highlighted during a panel at the "National Summit on America's Silent Epidemic." The Governor also discussed North Carolina's other comprehensive education reform efforts including *More at Four*, class size reduction, literacy coaches and the New Schools Project.

"Education today must be seamless," Easley said. "No matter where a person lives, what their age or school experience, we must be able to help them succeed in school and graduate ready for college so they can get skilled jobs and become informed, contributing members of their communities."

*Learn and Earn* schools provide students with an opportunity to graduate in four or five years with a high school diploma and either an associate's degree or two years of college credit. There are currently 33 *Learn and Earn* schools around the state. In his budget, Easley has called on the state legislature to open 22 new schools this fall and another 20 in fall 2008. Most schools are located on the campuses of community colleges or universities.

Easley's *Learn and Earn Online* budget proposal provides over \$35 million dollars in the next two years for community colleges and universities to expand their online courses and so local schools can improve and expand their high-speed, broadband Internet access. The state will pay for the credit-hours and textbooks for high school students taking college courses so there is no charge to the students and their families.

Easley is also proposing EARN scholarships to provide \$150 million dollars over the next two years to give students from low and moderate-income families \$4,000 in financial aid per year for two years of college if they agree to work 10 hours per week. If these students already have an associate's degree through a *Learn and Earn* program, the scholarship will help them earn a four year degree and graduate from college debt-free.

In addition to the early college high schools, Easley's New Schools Project also includes economic development themed schools. These schools have no more than 400 students and a curriculum focused on emerging industries such as biotech, health care and information technology. Currently there are 25 of these schools across the state and 10 more are set to open in the fall of 2007.

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